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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR NOVEMBER 18, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for November 18, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

ZAMAN / YENI SAFAK: Cemil Cicek, Minister of Interior, drew attention to the role DEHAP (Democratic People's Party) played in the latest incidents in Semdinli and claimed that DEHAP had never done anything good to solve the issue. According to Cemil Cicek, those people who are disturbed about the stability and peace in Turkey are using terrorist organizations to disrupt peaceful conditions.

RADIKAL / ZAMAN / YENI SAFAK: Cicek wanted people to be confident that the bombing incident in Semdinli will not be covered up and will be investigated.

RADIKAL: A Parliamentary Commission Delegation will be visiting Semdinli on November 22. The delegation cancelled a planned trip to Semdinli a day earlier due to the cancellation of flights due to adverse weather conditions.

RADIKAL: PM Erdogan is expected to visit Semdinli, Yuksekova and Hakkari following the visits to these districts of the Minister of Interior and Minister of Justice (on an unspecified date).

YENI SAFAK / CUMHURIYET: Tension in Semdinli is subsiding, according to the Yeni Safak daily. Hakkari Mayor Metin Takce dismissed allegations that tension was stirred up among the people of Semdinli by certain people during the incidents. Tekce denied the Hakkari Governor's claims that people were readily following the district mayor's instructions. Tekce branded such claims as attempts to make mayors vulnerable as targets of hostile intentions. Tekce drew attention to the fact that people in Yuksekova and Hakkari never used firearms against the security forces. Tekce demanded that the soldiers and police opening fire on people should be prosecuted.

ZAMAN: Kursat Gulsen, an attorney from Ankara Bar Association, will defend the two junior officers, who are accused of being involved in the latest November 9 Semdinli incident. Because of the controversy over whether Jandarma Command was involved in the selection of the previously announced attorney or not, the defendants changed their attorney to Gulsen.

ZAMAN / OZGUR GUNDEM: A mine planted on a railroad 25 kilometers away from Van went off and caused one of the cars of a train to derail. No casualties were reported.

CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM / RADIKAL / HURRIYET / ZAMAN / YENI SAFAK: Funerals of two of the three demonstrators, who died during the public unrest that broke out in Yuksekova on Wednesday, was held in Yuksekova without incident. Yet, a barely controlled tension marked the mood of the people during the funerals, according to Radikal daily. The people walking towards the cemetery and carrying the coffins told the journalists to report the true numbers of people who attended the funeral and claimed that over 100,000 people were there. Yet, Zaman daily reporter said that this number was exaggerated. Radikal daily reported that the population of Yuksekova was nearly 100,000, and over 50,000 people reportedly attended the funerals. During the funerals, "so-called confederation flags" were flown and people chanted slogans in support for the terrorist organization PKK and its jailed leader Abdullah Ocalan. People demanded that the Hakkari Governor resign. During his address to the crowd, Selim Sadak, former DEP deputy, called on PM Erdogan and all the other circles sensitive to this issue, to come to Semdinli.

SABAH / HURRIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM / CUMHURIYET / RADIKAL / ZAMAN / YENI SAFAK / BOLGE / EKSPRES / SABAH (GUNEY): Two F-16 airplanes reportedly flew low four times over the people walking towards the funeral place. Reportedly, one of the local people said, "We are not terrorists. I have five sons. Two of them are in the mountains (enrolled in the ranks of the PKK) and two of them are doing their military service. We do not want to see brothers killing each other." Meanwhile, a funeral of a soldier, who was killed by a mine blast in Van's Baskale district, was held in Adana's Kozan district. The soldier's mother sang Kurdish mourning songs during the funeral. Adana Deputy Governor and the Security Director attended the ceremony

as well.

YENI SAFAK: According to the daily, Huseyin Celik, Minister of Interior, is among those people Yucel Askin, the rector of Van's Centennial University (VCU), illegally collected information against during the period Celik was working as a faculty member at VCU (see press summary 11/17).

RADIKAL: When reporters asked Celik questions on the case of Yucel Askin, Celik said, "I would not want to make further comments now that could hurt a person who is in hospital and is in misery." (Note: Another meaning of the word used in Turkish for 'a person in misery' implies 'a fallen person' who lost grace and experienced defeat. End Note.)

RADIKAL / ZAMAN / BOLGE / EKSPRES: Tacidar Seyhan, CHP deputy from Adana, brought the issue of a teacher, who allegedly delivered a test "having the logo of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) on it" to the primary school students in Adana, to the agenda of the Turkish Parliament. Seyhan demanded an investigation be brought against the teacher who allegedly tried to inflict the image of a political party on the minds of small children. Zaman daily claimed that the teacher only used the drawing of an electric lamp to teach the students the concept of "light."

RADIKAL: According to allegations that lately surfaced in the Kilis province, the Kilis Jandarma Commander and the Kilis Governor have allegedly protected and covered to date the criminals who killed Ekrem Cetin, Kilis mayor, and his son, the CHP provincial chairperson in June. A relative of Ekrem Cetin drew attention to similarities between aspects of this incident and the Semdinli incident.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

ZAMAN: Seyhmus Akbas, National Chairperson of the GUNSIAD (Federation of Southeastern Industrialists and Businessmen Associations) said that people behind the incidents in Semdinli and Hakkari did not want peace and stability to be permanently established in the region. Akbas conveyed the frustrations and worries of the region's businessmen over the latest developments.

12. SABAH (GUNEY) / EKSPRES / ZAMAN: An Adana business delegation returned from their business trip to Syria. Adana Governor Cahit Kirac, Adapazari Chamber of Commerce, and businessmen from Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus participated in this trip, as well.
REID